

RECOGNIZING SAN JACINTO DAY
2005

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 21, 2005

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today marks the Battle of San Jacinto, the victory of independence for Texas from Mexico—the greatest State in the Union in my opinion. This day reminds the world that Texans refuse oppression from any source.

On April 21, 1836, 169 years ago, approximately 900 Texans and Tejanos volunteers overpowered a larger, professional Mexican army. Today, Texans are celebrating all day at the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site in our congressional district, including impressive historic re-enactments.

Less than 100 years after American patriots threw off the tyrannical British Empire's military domination, Texans and Tejanos succeeded in a similar struggle against a military dictator, General Santa Anna.

In the words of the Texas Declaration of Independence, the people's government had been "forcibly changed, without their consent, from a restricted federative republic, composed of sovereign states, to a consolidated central military despotism."

Military dictatorships are the world's most notoriously evil governments and the moral justification for the Texas Revolution is equally applicable to certain countries today. Unfortunately, as Texans know, freedom requires great sacrifice.

After the tragedy at the Alamo, Texan and Tejano forces retreated, but in late April 1836, they took a stand on the banks of the bayous outside Houston, Texas.

As a result of their bravery, the nation, and then the State of Texas were born. Like the American Revolution, the Texan Revolution brought many different people together fighting military oppression.

The Texas Revolution proves the bands of freedom are stranger than ethnicity, as many Tejanos proved at Gonzalez, Bexar, Goliad, the Alamo, along the banks of the San Jacinto River, and in the government of the Republic of Texas.

Like on July 4th, on San Jacinto Day Texans celebrate the achievements of our patriots, and give thanks for our opportunity to have representative government.

Thank you Mr. Speaker, God bless Texas.

COMMEMORATING THE 35TH
ANNIVERSARY OF EARTH DAY

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 21, 2005

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 35th anniversary of Earth Day.

I have seen first hand the damage that environmental injustices bring to poor and underserved communities. Growing up in Los Angeles County, my community was plagued by bad air and industrial wasteland. In Los Angeles, 60 percent of the facilities that produce the most toxic waste are located in minority and low-income communities. My predomi-

nantly Latino district is spoiled by dozens of abandoned gas stations with leaking fuel tanks, four Superfund sites, 17 gravel pits, and one of the country's most polluted watersheds.

The environmental issues I focus on all have one thing in common—they directly affect our health. As a public servant, one of my goals is to make sure that our environment is protected, restored, and most importantly, safe for our families, wherever they live.

Since he first took office in 2001, President Bush's policies have hurt our health, worsened our air quality, and destroyed the quality of our drinking water. Worse, President Bush refuses to make polluters pay for the cleanup of these sites at all, and the cleanups that are occurring are being paid for by the taxpayers.

The administration's misguided policies, like Clear Skies, will worsen our air quality, increasing asthma, bronchitis and lost days at work across the country. This policy will do nothing to help and everything to harm the over 70 percent of all Latinos and African Americans who live in counties that violate federal air pollution standards. As a result, the 35,000 cases of asthma in the San Gabriel Valley will increase, and there will be 14,000 more lost days of work and 175 more cases of bronchitis in Los Angeles County.

As we observe Earth Day 2005, it is critical that we continue to fight to make sure future generations are healthy, their air quality is safe and they have a secure supply of drinking water.

MARIE SMITH TURNS 50

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 21, 2005

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, Marie Smith, my dear wife of 27 years and mother of our four wonderful children, turns 50 on Monday, April 25.

And although I've known, deeply loved and cherished Marie for more than three decades, I find that mere words are inadequate to convey just how remarkable, unique and special she is.

She's amazing.

Marie Smith is a strong woman of abiding faith in Christ, rock solid character, generosity and goodness. She radiates the love and compassion of Christ to family, friends and strangers alike with a gentle piety and grace. She has class and self-confidence yet is humble and extremely kind. She always looks out for the underdog—especially a child left behind.

Marie has a great sense of humor and always makes people feel at ease and welcome. I just love the way she laughs and smiles. She is my best friend—and I love her so.

Marie and I met in 1974 at a prayer meeting at college. For me, it was love at first sight. For her, well, it took a while. We worked on pro-life issues—she eventually became president of the organization—and early on recognized the life changing core value found in Matthew's Gospel, the 25th chapter, when Jesus said "Whatsoever you do to the least of My brethren, you do unto Me." We grew to understand that God Himself identified with—was one with—anyone, anywhere who was

weak, vulnerable, unwanted or disenfranchised. That meant unborn babies killed by abortion, their moms, the hungry, trafficked women, the homeless, disabled and sick persons and others who are being exploited or are at risk. That meant all of the "least" were all of infinite value and worth to God. It revolutionized our private and public lives.

An honor student in both high school and college and a voracious reader, Marie is very smart and has that rare quality that enables her to grasp, understand and solve complex problems. She often "sleeps on a problem" and awakes in the morning with the answer. She is very creative and effectively thinks both inside and outside the box. Her advice and counsel over the years have been priceless.

In the early years, Marie worked as a first grade teacher at St. Hedwig's School in Trenton and thrived on it before devoting herself fulltime to the upbringing of our kids. Today, she works for Feminists for Life and pours herself into efforts to protect women and children from violence and cruelty.

Our two girls and two boys richly benefited from Marie's warmth, kindness and dedication. She was always there for them. Always. Melissa, Chris, Mike and Elyse always knew—and know—beyond a shadow of a doubt that they were number one in her life—our lives—and that there were no favorites in our household.

Marie is the quintessential multi-tasker—teacher, nurse, chef and homework checker as well as soccer, baseball, lacrosse and basketball Mom.

Our kids have always known, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that they are much loved, much wanted, much cared for and much prayed for. It is both a comfort and encouragement to know that Marie intercedes for and gives thanks to the Lord unceasingly for our family and our friends.

Our kids greatly value and appreciate their mother, and I now defer to them to elaborate:

This April 25th, I am so happy to celebrate my mom's 50th birthday. The world is certainly a better place because of her! Mom has been the steady rock in my and my siblings' lives—always there with an answer, suggestion, open ear, love and support. She sincerely mourns our disappointments and enthusiastically celebrates our accomplishments. Mom has helped me find my way through the many choices and challenges that are inevitable in the formative years, and as a married adult now, I still often seek her advice, and will continue to do so.

Mom's "can-do" outlook makes anything possible, whether it's a stubborn word problem, science fair project, search for the perfect prom dress, or wedding centerpieces. She always poses thoughtful suggestions and selflessly offers help until the task is done or the decision is made. Her patience and flexibility are unceasing, or at least always seem to be!

Mom brings special touches into everyday life—notes in lunches, candy found in a suitcase while traveling, favorite treats for no reason, and thoughtful unexpected gestures that remind me just how much she really knows me. Holidays and special occasions are always made extra special, the essential part being that the family is together. I have learned from my mom the value of family, and the importance of unconditional love and total faith in Christ.

In our house my mom had a sign that read, "Home is where the heart is." And while I love the house I grew up in, I know that "home" will always be where Mom is—for

she is the heart of our family.—Melissa Smith Clement.

The way Mom tucked me in at night always brought pleasant dreams.

On waking, my groggy head would hear her laughter and wonder, “How is anyone so joyful in the morning?”

Throughout the day I would watch her with affection. Her love went into even the simplest of things. I was always moved by the tenderness with which she read a book, folded a shirt, or made a sandwich.

Now when I hear her laugh, it conveys her innocence; the years must make her younger. Do you see the confidence in her stride? The years must make her wiser. Judging by the length of her smile, her heart must be growing bigger.

I celebrate my mom on this day in April, celebrate my mom every day.—Chris Smith.

The most reliable and compassionate. The most outgoing and joyous. My mother is more than I could ask for. She has always given everything she possibly could without a second thought. She has always gone above and beyond to show her love for my siblings and me. I love her so much and wish her a happy birthday!—Mike Smith.

This week, we will be celebrating the 50th birthday of my mom. For 50 years she has brought love and joy to each person she has met, most especially her family. Her gentle kindness and patient understanding communicates her deep love for her family. She does not just take care of our family physically, but spiritually and emotionally. I cannot count how many times she was the shoulder to cry on when one of us kids had a bad day, or how many words of praise she showered us

with when we did well in school or in sports. She is always there with words to guide us in our lives and in our faith.

As I have grown older, I have come to realize what an intelligent, wise and loving woman Mom is. Each day she gives of herself for our family and sets an example for us a Christ-centered life. She inspires us to turn to God and trust in His care. Mom is not afraid to stand up for her beliefs, and she has dedicated her life to living the Gospel of Christ. It is impossible to adequately describe the love and care which Mom selflessly gives each day. I feel sincerely blessed to call such a wonderful woman “mom” and I pray that she will have many more birthdays in the years to come. I love you Mom!—Elyse Smith.